

PROMISING PRACTICES

PLANT THE SEEDS,
**REAP THE
BENEFITS**



WHAT IS A PROMISING PRACTICE?

“Promising Practices” are everywhere. New ideas or refinements of ideas are continuously being implemented by Federal and State governments, community and faith-based organizations, and retailers to educate, assist individuals in accessing the FSP and create economic opportunities for retailers in our communities. Promising practices may involve large or small changes to existing marketing or outreach initiatives to improve service delivery. They may or may not have evidence of positive results from evaluations; in fact, they might just have a general intuitive appeal rather than a proven effect. Promising practices sometimes prompt completely different ideas. Sometimes, promising practices are those “Aha” moments--something that makes sense but you did not think significant right away. Unfortunately, practical knowledge in one community that could lead to significant improvements in another often goes unshared.



Who is compiling our promising practices?

The FSP is compiling promising practices to assist States, local agencies, community and faith-based organizations, retailers and others share their best ideas. They are updated periodically on the web site listed below.

How can I share my promising practice?

Submit your practice to us through the FNS web site. Tell us about something new you are doing or how you put an innovative twist on an existing idea. Go ahead and brag about the response you received from your coworkers, managers, or your customers. This is an opportunity to shine while you give others ideas to improve or develop their projects. Worried that your idea may not be new? Not to worry: something that is “old hat” to some may be a complete revelation to others.

PROMISING PRACTICES ARE ONLINE

Go to: www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach and click on “Promising Practices.”

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A NEW IDEA?

On the website, you will find information that you can use in your own project. You can learn about promising practices from around the country as well as from other programs.

WHO CAN USE THE WEB SITE?

The web site is for State and local food stamp agencies as well as Federal/State program staff, volunteers, community members, retailers, policy makers, funders, researchers or anyone else who wants to develop a project or improve the quality of their existing programs.



EXAMPLES OF PROMISING PRACTICES

Massachusetts – The Department of Transitional Assistance (Food Stamp Program) designed an index card with a toll-free number for Food Stamp Program assistance that can be posted at grocery store check out counters. For more information, contact Lauren Arms at (617) 348-5452 or lauren.arms@state.ma.us.

Washington – Old Town Christian Ministries, an outreach contractor for the Department of Social and Health Services in the State's Region 3, successfully conducts outreach events at stores of Grocery Outlet, an authorized Food Stamp Program retailer. They have found that the best method for convincing local store managers to allow outreach activities at the stores is by showing them that more people enrolling in the Food Stamp Program equals more revenue for the store. For more information, contact: Patti Clark, DSHS Basic Food Education and Outreach Program Manager, (360) 725-4613, clarkpj@dshs.wa.gov.

Pennsylvania – Pathmark grocery chain, in partnership with the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger, hosted outreach events in their Philadelphia stores. The nutritionists prepared healthy meals and were on hand to answer questions and hand out samples. They also took applications using Pennsylvania's online application system. They are working with FNS to identify local partners to work with them in hosting these events at stores throughout the region. For more information, contact: Rich Savner, Director of Public Affairs, Pathmark, 200 Milk Street, Cataret, NJ 07008, rsavner@pathmark.com, (732) 499-3000.

Kansas – The Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services has established a partnership to fight hunger with Dillon Stores (80 grocery stores statewide) and the Kansas Food Bank. The kickoff event was held at the Dillon Store in Hutchinson to coincide with National Hunger Awareness Day. Nineteen organizations sponsored booths and approximately 500 food stamp applications and informational packets were distributed to attendees. Another 900 applications and informational brochures were provided to Dillon Stores for distribution at nine of their stores in the surrounding area. Ongoing outreach is being provided at all Dillon Stores. Food Assistance (food stamps) and Kansas Food Bank information as well as a prescreening tool and applications are available at Dillons Stores customer service desks. Outreach messages are also included in Dillon Stores advertisements to the public. For more information, contact: Alice Womack, Assistant Director, Capacity and Resource Development, Kansas DSRS, DSOB, 915 S.W. Harrison, 681W, Topeka KS 66612, (785) 291-3314, acw@srskansas.org.

Ohio – The egg industry offered to print free of charge Food Stamp Program information on the egg cartons distributed through Ohio food banks to low-income Ohioans. A Food Stamp Program outreach message was printed on the outside of the carton and the FSP eligibility requirements were printed inside the carton. The eggs were purchased as part of a State-funded market clearing initiative called the Ohio Agricultural Surplus Production Alliance. For more information, contact: Marilyn Braun, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 30 East Broad Street, 31st Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43266, (614) 466-6814.

New York – FoodChange developed a one-stop recipe book entitled *Quick! Delicious! Healthy Recipes on a Budget!* demonstrating how Food Stamp Program benefits can help households improve their nutrition with food that is both affordable and healthy. Culturally accessible recipes are accompanied by nutritional composition and estimated cost per serving (based on seasonal produce prices at a local Bronx supermarket). Also included are food stamp eligibility and application guidelines; and information on Medicaid, WIC, Headstart, school meals, the advantages to buying local produce, buying tips, and the value of farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture shares. Cooking demonstrations and distributing the book at New York City Pathmark grocery stores complement the success of FoodChange's prescreening operations at these sites. For more information, contact: Food Access at FoodChange, 39 Broadway, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10006, (212) 894-8053.

FNS – Updates can be obtained by contacting Susan Sheets at susan.sheets@fns.usda.gov or by visiting www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach.



10 FOOD STAMP PROGRAM OUTREACH IDEAS FOR RETAILERS



Help your customers learn about the nutrition benefits of the FSP. FSP benefits bring Federal funds into your community that can increase sales in your store. With food stamps, your low-income customers can purchase more healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, whole-grain foods and dairy products.

As a retailer, you can:

1. Display FSP posters and other materials. Go to www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/info.htm for free USDA materials.
2. Invite local groups such as food banks, antihunger groups, or other community or faith-based groups to staff an information table to give out FSP information or prescreen customers for eligibility. Use the prescreening tool available at www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov.
3. Put FSP information such as national (1-800-221-5689) or local FSP toll-free numbers on grocery bags and in weekly circulars and bulletins.
4. Publish FSP materials in languages spoken in your community. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/translations.htm.
5. Print FSP promotional messages on store receipts.
6. Broadcast FSP public service announcements in your store. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/radio/default.htm.
7. Host nutritious food tasting or cooking demonstrations. Give out recipe cards that contain nutritious information and the national (1-800-221-5689) or local food stamp toll-free number. Check out the recipe finder at <http://foodstamp.nal.usda.gov/recipes.php>.
8. Form partnerships with local community and advocacy groups. Host a health fair to conduct FSP eligibility prescreening (www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov). Invite local media to the event.
9. Partner with Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) processors to train cashiers about the under utilization of FSP.
10. Encourage EBT processors to add recorded messages to their help-desk numbers promoting the nutrition benefits of FSP and encouraging FSP clients to tell a friend.

Sharing ideas can stimulate program changes, spark creative exchanges, and serve as a launching pad for the next generation of program innovations.

